

Political parties reflect a loosely coupled group of people who are gathered around a general set of common values. Since we share a common founding document in this Country, there should be broad overlap between the two major parties. As a party draws the circle of acceptable principles more tightly around itself, the ability to find common ground with a wide mix of the electorate becomes more difficult. What is left representing the party label is ideologies. That is the direction the Republican party has tilted in this State.

When the Republican party asked me to run for the City Council, there was quite the buzz around HQ that they had found somebody who both embodied the broad principles they shared, and yet had the sort of resume that would attract cross-over votes in a general election. Those principles include fiscal responsibility, support for the local business community and job creation, and an advocate for our public safety agencies. In addition, they saw that I've worked with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable children in Africa, with men struggling with substance addictions here in Tucson, and support the strong arts and cultural heritage that makes Tucson what we are. During the campaign, they loved it.

We know the template so well that it has become a cliché; in a primary, run to the right (or left) to solidify your base, and in a general, run to the center to get the cross-over votes. After the election, run back to your base. We see it all the time. That's the system we're being offered. It's dishonest, erratic and does not lend itself to building the trust of the electorate in subsequent elections.

The trouble the Arizona GOP has is that with me, they got what was advertised. I'd call it "Truth in Advertising." Political hierarchies view their role as containing their membership through the work of party bosses called the "Party Whip." Think about that title. Independent thought and reaching across the aisle is discouraged by our system.

I was not elected to represent just Republicans. I was elected to represent the many voices that make up our community, irrespective of party affiliation. It is completely fair and justified that the Party expect me to continue to reflect the general principles on which I ran. I have done that. But I neither ran as a fringe ideologue, nor will I govern that way. The divisiveness we see at the State level is not healthy, nor will it produce good public policy. I'm being asked to reflect that locally. I was not elected to do that, and I will not.

Character and integrity are not defined by party label. I have openly supported two men who score highly in both areas. Their party label is an irrelevancy. I have suggested that the candidates in each party step aside in the D8 race and focus on the D2 legislative District race. That's not a misunderstanding of our system. It's simply saying allow the Giffords team to finish their work and focus on the District that will remain after the November election. Lord knows, some of the candidates could have benefited from the softening of their image that would have resulted had they agreed.

Some have suggested to me that "politics is a team sport." If winning political games is your goal, perhaps so. If crafting good public policy is your goal, you understand that this isn't a game. Aristotle said that "All men by nature desire knowledge." That is gained by listening, and dialogue. We need more, not less of that.